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Estes Park wins prestigious award at *America in Bloom* symposium

Top honors for the 2014 *America in Bloom* national awards program were announced at the annual symposium held in Philadelphia, PA on October 4. The community was honored as the nationwide winner in its population category of 4,001-7,000 residents with a four out of five “bloom rating” and a special mention for overall impression as a result of the extensive flood recovery efforts. Due to its many achievements, the community of Estes Park also advanced to *America in Bloom*’s prestigious Circle of Champions, becoming the youngest community in the program to receive that honor. Brian Berg, certified Arborist with the Town of Estes Park who attended the symposium on behalf of the Town says “the local businesses, residents and all of our government entities did such an amazing job restoring Estes Park to the place we all love. This award solidifies what we all know -- that we live in a great community.”

Susie Stratton and Sue Amatangelo, two specially trained *America in Bloom* judges visited Estes Park July 21 and 22 to evaluate Estes Park in its second entry in the *America in Bloom* program. During the visit, the steering committee and community partners guided the judges on tours of downtown Estes Park, the Estes Park Museum, the YMCA and Recreation and Park District grounds, the Memorial Garden at the Estes Park Senior Center, Mrs. Walsh’s Garden, MacGregor Ranch, Ram’s Horn Village Resort, MacGregor Mountain Lodge, the Baldpate Inn and a historical trolley tour with Historian Laureate Jim Pickering and Fun Tyme Trolleys. The judging team provided a detailed, written evaluation during the annual *America in Bloom* symposium. The judges said “The natural beauty and wildlife of the entire area of Estes Park is breathtaking. Without a doubt the floral displays all over the city are done right and make the community come alive with color. From annual beds to container gardens, the city has provided a feast for the eyes of residents and visitors right from the moment they enter the city limits. Even with the damage from the flood and the mounds of silt that were left behind, the city is completely free and clean of silt, damage, litter and graffiti. If the judges had not seen the pictures of last year’s devastation themselves, they would never have known how far this city has come. There are pocket parks everywhere and most are surrounded by well-tended landscaping, floral displays and water or sculpture features. Whether it’s biking, hiking, skiing, photography or just enjoying the local sights and wildlife, it is clear to see why so many come to visit and why others come to stay.”

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America in Bloom is a non-profit, nationwide program promoting beautification through education and community involvement, while utilizing flowers, plants, trees, and other lifestyle enhancements. Locally known as *Estes Park in Bloom*, the project is a community-wide effort involving local organizations, businesses, residents and Town government. In 2014, the local steering committee included representatives from the Estes Valley Recreation and Park District, YMCA of the Rockies, Visit Estes Park, the Estes Park Restaurant Association, Estes Valley Partners for Commerce and the Town of Estes Park. Since *America in Bloom* was founded in 2001, nearly 200 cities in 40 states have participated. For more information or to become involved in the *Estes Park in Bloom* project for 2015, contact Keri Kelly at 970-577-3782 or email kkelly@estes.org. To receive Town news and/or meeting agendas in your email inbox, please email townadmin@estes.org.

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